1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

Kols have neither mud walls nor wooden doors. When they leave the house, a bit of thorny brush is put in front of the doorway. This will keep out dogs and also any dangerous spirit which may be seeking admission. 342

When the building of a house is completed, there is usually a dedicatory ceremony consisting of installing and worshipping the household god or goddess or both, and a small niche in a corner or in the side wall is reserved for this purpose. The place is marked with *sendur* and the *hom* sacrifice is made. An offering of a chicken or young goat may also be made at the village shrine. A *tulasi* plant should also be planted somewhere in the courtyard. 342 776 778

DAILY LIFE. The daily life of the village and forest Kol centres mainly about the problem of daily bread. Before daybreak the women are up and are the first to be seen about the village. They sweep the house, the veranda and the courtyard; fetch water from a nearby stream, well or tank and grind the wheat for the morning meal. The sound of the grindstone is one of the earliest to be heard in a Kol village. The men are also up early, but do not have much to do in the way of household duties unless it is to chop a bit of wood. They wash their faces and rinse out their mouths with water which the women have brought, and, if they have bullocks, these are fed and got ready for the work in the fields; or if this is not to be done, they sit around in the sun in the courtyard and wait for some hot tea, or more probably for rice and *chapati* remaining from the meal of the night before. During the season when the work is heavy, they are in the field not long after the day has dawned, and the village is inhabited only by the women, children and older men. The bullocks for ploughing are driven before them; some of the older boys may assist in this, and the men carry the iron-pointed wooden plough. If some of the men-folk have no work in the fields, they may go into the forest for wood and grass; or, if there is plenty of food in the house and there is no pressing need for money, they sit around in groups and smoke cheap country cigarettes (*biris*) and gossip. 512 [252] [515] [264] [492] [407] [276 521]

In the meantime the women are preparing the morning meal. It is not usual for men and women to eat together. The women and children usually eat about the same time, though when the boys get in their teens, they like to eat with the men. During the middle of the morning, after the meal is nearly ready the women go for their daily bath to a nearby stream or tank. Women bathe every day throughout the year. The men bathe daily in the hot weather, but not so frequently in winter. The women do not remove their clothes when they bathe, though men usually remove all but a loincloth. The women [264] [515]

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

539 773 THE ORIGIN OF KOLS. There are several stories recorded elsewhere[1] concerning the origin of the Kols. This story may supplement them. While Rama was in exile in the forest, many of the gods took compassion on him and descended to the earth in human form in order to assist him. These gods called themselves Kolas. After the fourteen-year period of exile was over, Rama returned to his Kingdom and became King of Ayodhya. The Kolas went back to heaven—Indrapuri. The Kols of today are the descendants of the gods who were in the forest along with Rama. This proves the divine origin and nature of the Kols.

HOW THE KOLS LOST THEIR RIGHTS. From the beginning, the Kols enjoyed many rights, and in their prestige were second to none. Once Shivari was going on a journey. A man was hired to carry her [492] luggage in a *kanwar*—two baskets attached to the ends of a bamboo pole slung over the shoulder. Thus they started off. After they had gone some distance, the man said to Shivari: "Why do you walk, when there in the field is a horse for you to ride upon?" This gave Shivari an idea. The horse was brought, but she could not get on it, and so she took an axe and began to chop at the horse's legs to shorten them. The man shouted: "What are you doing?" She replied: "I wish to prepare two pegs out of the horse's legs so that I may use them to mount the horse as he is too high for me." The man said: "Fool, you know nothing; you are spoiling the horse. Take this *kanwar* and I will show you how to ride a horse." So he gave to her the *kanwar* with her luggage within the baskets and jumping on the horse, he rode away. From that day on Shivari had to carry her own luggage everywhere, and her descendants became coolies. The man was really Bhagawan in the form of Ramachandraji, and took away from her the high privileges which were really hers, because she was so stupid. Thus Bhagawan deceived the Kols and cheated them of their rights, and ever since that time they have been burden bearers and coolies.

492 539 773 There are various stories about the horse and the dispossession of the Kols by others. A Brahmin was once ploughing a field, and a Kol happened to pass that way on horseback. The Kol was much interested as he had never witnessed ploughing before. He descended from his horse and after watching the process a while, wondered if he could also do it. To test himself he caught hold of the plough and attempted to use it. The Brahmin then jumped on the horse and rode away and was never seen again. So the Kol had to continue to plough the field and

1 See pages 4-10, 36, 37, 38, 39-40, 41-42.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

has been ploughing ever since. It was really Bhagawan in the form of a Brahmin that deceived the foolish Kol, and Kols have never ridden horseback since that time.

DEPRIVED OF BREAD. In olden days Kols had plenty to eat, but they did not know how to eat their food properly. Instead of breaking their *chapatis* with their hands, they used axes upon them. This displeased Bhagawan, and he sent poverty amongst them, and Kols nowadays get their daily bread only after very hard labour.

There is another tradition linking the horse and bread together. The story goes as before that, when the Kols were first upon the earth, they had plenty to satisfy all their needs. They had horses to ride upon, plenty of wheat and *ghi* and fruits. They lived happily, acquired much wealth, and became the most powerful people in all the regions about. But they could not ride upon horses properly. They conceived the plan of shortening their horses' legs with axes, so that they would not have so much difficulty in mounting and would also not have to fall so far. They also began to chop up their *chapatis* with axes. When Bhagawan came to know of all this, he was very angry and took away the axes and all the horses. He gave the Kols sickles and commanded that thereafter they should never ride a horse and that they should work as labourers in reaping the harvests of others.

THE LOSS OF THE SACRED THREAD. In the beginning, the Kols were the highest of all peoples and wore the sacred thread, which is today the right of the twice-born castes only. But once for some reason, Bhagawan called the people together and put the Kols last, thus angering them greatly for they felt humiliated in the presence of all. In their anger and to show their disregard for the sacred thread, they tore them off and scattered them in all directions. These became attached to trees and bushes and at once began to grow and became *Amarbel* (*Cuscuta reflexa*), a greenish yellow parasitic plant now found in many parts of Central India. Any bit of it will attach itself to a tree or bush and grow easily. "Now," say the Kols, "we would challenge any Brahmin to do the same. Let them throw away their sacred threads. There was life in ours but theirs are dead."

HOW THE KOLS BECAME SEVEN FAMILIES. At first there was but one family of Kols, the descendants of Shivari. This family besought the favour of Bhagawan in prayers which were unselfish and which asked not for wealth or food. Bhagawan therefore blessed